

IN THE CLAIMS

1-27. (canceled)

28. (currently amended) A content server for distributing upgraded content data, comprising:

a network interface for receiving an upgrade request from a user for content data previously downloaded by the user from the content server as base data of a first format; wherein the upgrade request specifies a target format of a higher quality than the first format;

a storage unit having a user-related information section for checking user-related information of the base data previously downloaded by the user;

an upgrading-data generating unit for generating upgrading data of the content data to upgrade the previously downloaded base data of the first format to the target format, the upgrading-data being generated on a user-to-user basis by reviewing a usage-history of the user to determine the first format and then calculating the difference between the data in the first format and the data in the target format; and

the network interface transmitting the upgrading data to the user in response to the upgrade request,

the base data representing the content at a first quality, and the upgrading data being difference data that is combined with the base data to generate data representing the content at a second quality that is higher than the first quality.

29. (previously presented) The content server according to claim 28, wherein the base data includes a header comprising content-grade identification information indicating the first format.

30. (previously presented) The content server according to claim 28, wherein the higher quality is at least one of a higher sampling frequency and a higher bit rate of the content data.

31. (currently amended) A personal terminal for the playback of content data, comprising:

a network interface for sending an upgrade request to a content server for content data previously downloaded by a user as base data of a first format and receiving upgrading-data of the content data in response; wherein the upgrade request specifies a target format of a higher quality than the first format, the upgrading-data being generated on a user-to-user basis by reviewing a usage-history of the user to determine the first format and then calculating the difference between the data in the first format and the data in the target format;

a content-data combining unit for combining the upgrading data with the previously downloaded base data, whereby the base data is upgraded to the target format; and

an audio-signal processing unit for playback of the upgraded base data having the target format,

the base data representing the content at a first quality, and the upgrading data being difference data that is combined with the base data to generate data representing the content at a second quality that is higher than the first quality.

32. (previously presented) The personal terminal according to claim 31, wherein the base data includes a header comprising content-grade identification information indicating the first format.

33. (previously presented) The personal terminal according to claim 31, wherein the higher quality is at least

one of a higher sampling frequency and a higher bit rate of the content data.

34. (currently amended) A method of distributing upgraded content data, comprising the steps of:

receiving an upgrade request from a user for content data previously downloaded as base data of a first format from a server; wherein the upgrade request specifies a target format of a higher quality than the first format;

checking user-related information in the server of the base data previously downloaded by the user;

generating upgrading data of the content data to upgrade the previously downloaded base data of the first format to the target format, the upgrading-data being generated on a user-to-user basis by reviewing a usage-history of the user to determine the first format and then calculating the difference between the data in the first format and the data in the target format; and

transmitting the upgrading data to the user in response to the upgrade request,

the base data representing the content at a first quality, and the upgrading data being difference data that is combined with the base data to generate data representing the content at a second quality that is higher than the first quality.